Industrial Problem 2:19

Christianity and Industry: Seven

INCENTIVES IN MODERN LIFE

ARE THE MOTIVES OF JESUS PRACTICABLE IN MODERN BUSINESS AND PROFESSIONAL LIFE?

BY

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The William Penn Lecture of 1922

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THE WILLIAM PENN LECTURE FOR 1922

WAS DELIVERED AT

THE RACE STREET MEETING HOUSE

FOR THE

YOUNG FRIENDS MOVEMENT

PHILADELPHIA

MAY 14TH

I: INTRODUCTION

A recent scientific bulletin estimates that three billion slaves would be required in the United States to do the work now being done by machines. It is further estimated that the mechanical power available is equivalent to fifty servants for every man, woman and child in this country. A huge turbine now produces energy equal to the labor of 400,000 strong men.

And yet this generation, which has fallen heir to incalculable energy and countless labor saving devices, is witnessing the spectacle of multitudes of people who are hungry and ill clad. Not only in the backward nations of the earth is this true, but across Europe there is appalling destitution. Even in our own land, the most favored of all the earth, large numbers of people are lacking in the necessities and minimum comforts of life. At a conservative estimate there are several million persons in the United States who are living in poverty or on the border of destitution.

An official commission of our Federal Government reported that "at least one-third and possibly one-half of the families of wage earners employed in manufacturing and mining earn in the course of the year less than enough to support them in anything like a comfortable and decent condition."

Another startling contrast is that between the claims and achievements of the churches. They claim to have a solution for all problems of human relations. For nineteen centuries they have been proclaiming a message of love, peace and brotherhood among men. And yet we are living in a world of strife. Everywhere men are

divided into warring camps. Nation is arrayed against nation, race against race, class against class. Bitterness and hatred are widespread.

How shall we account for the present state of affairs? Why are people hungry when the resources are at hand to supply their needs? Why are the churches so ineffective in overcoming strife and enmity?

II: TO WHAT EXTENT ARE THE INCENTIVES OF MODERN LIFE UNCHRISTIAN?

In a single address one cannot hope to deal with all of the complex issues involved. Only one phase of the situation can be considered. Much of the present turmoil and suffering is undoubtedly rooted in the incentives of modern life. We should, therefore, seek to analyze the dominant motives of men today. What are the chief influences which move men to action?

(1) THE DESIRE FOR A HIGHER STANDARD OF LIFE

This is a stimulus which is prevalent among all civilized people. The desire for wholesome food, serviceable clothing and pleasant surroundings is almost universal. One of the reasons why men exert themselves is that they may secure these things.

With a large proportion of the population in the United States the struggle is for the bare necessities and minimum comforts of life. Fear of hunger and destitution is ever present with large groups of people. With many other persons the struggle is for the comforts and minimum luxuries of life. And still others are striving for luxuries in abundance. This desire to raise one's standard of life is one of the impelling motives in modern life. Higher wages and larger profits are desired primarily as a means to this end. Modern industry rests upon the profit system. The appeal to self-interest is dominant. Financial reward is depended upon to secure maximum activity. Each person is supposed to make as large profits as he can, so long as he follows the accepted rules.

ENLIGHTENED SELF-INTEREST

For more than a century "enlightened self-interest," as a consciously accepted doctrine, has prevailed. It has been taken for granted by most Anglo-Saxon people that the welfare of all, can best be served by each person seeking his own good. Edmund Burke once said that we should be filled "with thankfulness to the benign and wise Disposer of all things, who obliges men, whether they will or not, in pursuing their own selfish interests, to connect the general good with their own individual successes." Archbishop Whately expresses a similar opinion: "It is curious to observe how through the wise and beneficient arrangement of Providence, men thus do the greatest service to the public when they are thinking of nothing but their own gain."

The opinion is still widely prevalent that modern industry cannot exist on any other basis than individual selfishness. A prominent banker recently said: "I know of no way of making any human being give $50,000 worth of service for $1,500 in pay. Nobody would care much about working hard enough to earn more than $10,000 a year just to see someone else get it."

In our protest against "profiteering" we have usually failed to realize how deeply engrained the profit motive is in modern life. Many persons are enraged at the few skilled workers who have successfully demanded $15 per day. Just now the wrath of the public is directed against coal miners and operators. It seems rather strange that we should find fault with a few workers and employers for doing the very thing which is most characteristic of modern business and industry.

The man who purchases a corner lot for $5,000 and two years later sells it for $12,000 is credited with good judgment. The broker who buys at 89 and sells for 148 is congratulated by his friends. The name of the "home-run king", whose salary runs into five figures, is a household word throughout the land. The prize fighter who receives $350,000 for a few well directed blows is acclaimed as a national hero. The movie star who draws a salary of a million dollars a year is the idol

of the fans. The farmer whose potato patch is transformed into an oil well and whose old buggy is exchanged for a Rolls Royce, becomes an object of admiration and envy on the part of his neighbors. And so it goes through modern life. The possessive instincts, the desire to own and to display are dominant.

Is the desire for more possessions unchristian? This question cannot be answered until we discover the consequences of having more possessions: upon ourselves and upon others. Possessions are the basis of culture. They furnish security and leisure. Want and the fear of want are deadly foes of the good life. The higher values are endangered when one is compelled to spend all of his time and energy in the struggle for mere existence. Family life, especially, is menaced by poverty. Certainly we would not say that the struggle of a man for possessions enough to enable him to support his family in modest comfort and security is unchristian. The unchristian thing in this connection is the set of circumstances which make this comfort and security impossible for many families.

What shall we say concerning the desire for more than the minimum comforts of life? Is such a desire unchristian? What are the effects of an annual income of $5,000 upon a family? There seems to be no doubt that most families could use an income of this amount to good advantage and would be enabled to live more abundantly as a result. The question, however, cannot be settled on this basis alone. We must also consider whether or not this sum is more than our share of the national income.

What shall we say concerning the larger incomes? Is the desire for great wealth unchristian? What are the consequences? For some persons great wealth means the opportunity for higher culture, for others it means a chance for riotous living. Great possessions bring larger opportunities and more dangers. At this point it will be recalled that Jesus warned his hearers of the perils of great riches and spoke of the difficulty with which a rich man can enter the Kingdom of God.

Are great fortunes a good thing for society? Do they

promote the public welfare? There is no doubt that large gifts to worthy causes, made possible by great fortunes, have done an immense amount of good. In almost every community there are evidences of these generous gifts. In the realms of public health, education, art and religion, the philanthropy of the rich has been an important factor.

On the other hand, we must take into account the menace of excessive concentration of wealth and power. While great fortunes make possible generous gifts, they also make possible a high degree of control in education, civic affairs and political life, and of public opinion. Great fortunes in the hands of selfish people do an immense amount of damage to the public welfare.

THE SOCIAL EFFECTS OF LUXURY

The point upon which we need to do the clearest thinking, however, is with regard to the social effects of luxuries. Does the production and consumption of luxuries promote the common good? There is a widespread belief that the production of luxuries "makes work" and "puts money in circulation," and is, therefore, a good thing for everybody. Is this idea supported by the facts in the case?

Let us consider an extreme instance, that of a wealthy man who decides to build a two-million-dollar mansion. He selects one of the most desirable plots in the city, fronting on the park. Plans are drawn up calling for fifty rooms, some of which are as large as four or five ordinary apartments; elaborate decorations; furnishings gathered from the corners of the earth; an immense pipe organ; swimming pool and a score of bath rooms, sunken gardens and a large hot-house; and a library of several thousand volumes. Hundreds of workers are employed for a year. After completion the building is used by one family, with occasional guests, for less than half the year. The public is rigorously excluded. Scores of servants are employed and the upkeep of the place costs upward of a hundred thousand dollars a year.

Has the expenditure of two million dollars upon this mansion been a good thing or a bad thing for society?

It has "made work" for hundreds of persons. It has put an immense amount of money in circulation. From the standpoint of society, however, it has done three other things: It has wasted human labor, it has wasted materials, it has wasted capital. The same workers, the same materials and the same capital might have been used in the erection of several hundred badly needed apartments. As many workers could have been employed and as much money put in circulation, and in the end several hundred times as many people would have been housed.

This is an extreme illustration and the number of cases of this sort is limited. But it does bring out the social consequences of the production of luxuries. The fact which should be stamped indelibly upon our minds is this: *Luxuries divert labor, materials and capital into channels which are of little social value, and therefore, raise the price of the necessities of life, thus increasing the struggle of the poor.* Upon this point economists are generally agreed.

In the light of this indisputable fact, the question should be raised: Is a Christian justified in living in luxury, at the expense of an intensified struggle on the part of the poor for the bare necessities of life? Is a Christian justified in even spending the amount necessary for his own fullest cultural development, at the expense of the less fortunate? What are the effects upon brotherhood of living in luxury while many are in want?

Still another factor needs to be considered, viz., the appalling human need in other parts of the world. The obligation which rests upon a follower of Jesus knows no boundaries of race or nation. The true Christian in America cannot be unmindful of the tragic need in the Orient, the Near East, or Europe. The expenditure of even a few dollars in the needier places of the earth means the saving of human lives, each of which is of inestimable worth in the sight of God. Are any of us justified in living in luxury in a hungry world?

At what point does the desire for personal possessions become unchristian? This question demands clear thinking, resolute decision and courageous action.

(2) THE DESIRE FOR SUCCESS OR PERSONAL POWER

A second major incentive in modern life is the *desire to succeed,* to achieve a given end. This motive operates powerfully with many persons who have no desire for great possessions. Moreover it is often the basis of the desire for great possessions, since possessions have now become a badge of success.

Mr. Charles M. Schwab, President of the Bethlehem Steel Corporation, once said: "When the achievements of my life have been completed and my obituary is being written, if I can leave as a monument a long line of smoke stacks and boiler works and rolling mills and establishments, I shall be prouder than of the grandest monument men might erect in my memory. The men in business in the United States are not working for money alone. The chief pride of American character is successful accomplishment. It may be measured by the dollars that go into his coffers, but the real throb and thrill of pleasure that comes to his mind is one of successful accomplishment."

The attitude of many business and professional men has been described by a prominent sociologist in these words: "American men make money as American boys play marbles in spring, baseball in summer, and football in autumn. The rich man toiling for more, often is simply trying to run up a high score at the national game."

The desire for personal power is closely bound up with the desire to succeed. Many men are thrilled at their ability to manipulate things, while some find their greatest joy in directing other people. The desire for the success which brings recognition and personal power is an important factor in modern life.

Is the desire for success and personal power unchristian? It depends upon the kind of success desired and the use to which power is put. None of us would say that it is unchristian to desire personal power as a means of helping other people. Unfortunately, power is more often desired for selfish reasons. Many persons desire power as a

means of satisfying selfish ambitions or of gratifying personal pride.

The wife of Zebedee once asked Jesus to grant to her sons the privilege of occupying the chief places of honor in his kingdom. In reply Jesus said to his desciples: "Ye know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. Not so shall it be among you: but whosoever would be first among you shall be your servant, even as the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister and give his life a ransom for many."

(3) THE DESIRE TO SERVE

A third major incentive in modern life is *the desire to serve*, to be of use in the world. This should not be confused with a popular meaning of "service" in business today. The word is often used as meaning courtesy, thoughtfulness, fair dealing and efficiency—for the sake of higher profits. Many persons believe in "service" because it pays.

There are, however, many persons in modern life whose chief stimulus is the genuine desire to help other folks and to have a share in building a better world. These persons are found in all walks of life—as merchants, teachers, lawyers, artists, preachers, scientists, surgeons, carpenters, bankers, farmers, and miners.

(4) SUMMARY

The evidence seems to indicate that the group whose chief motive is that of unselfish service is greatly outnumbered by those who are spurred to action by the desire for possessions or personal power. It seems unquestionable that of the total number of business and professional men in the United States, a large majority are motivated chiefly by the desire for possessions or for the power which accompanies success. Self-interest, enlightened or unenlightened, is still dominant in the lives of most people.

A well known writer has described what he believed to be the prevailing spirit of the times in these words:

"Look where you will, it is the spirit of I Myself which is paramount. Life exists for Me: all the dim aeons behind have toiled to produce Me: This brief moment in the eternal duration of time is only an opportunity for My pleasure and My ease. I care not a jot for the ages ahead and the sons of men who shall inhabit the earth when I am dust beneath their feet. Give Me My Rights. Stand clear of My way. I want and I will have."

III: ARE THE MOTIVES OF JESUS PRACTICABLE IN MODERN BUSINESS AND PROFESSIONAL LIFE?

(1) THE MOTIVES OF JESUS

The dominant motive of Jesus was service. "For the Son of Man himself has not come to be served but to serve." "For the Son of Man has come to seek and save the lost." "I have come that they may have life and have it the full." "And for their sake I consecrate myself that they may be consecrated by the truth." Love was the supreme characteristic of his life. He went about doing good, healing the sick, feeding the hungry, strengthening the tempted, lifting up the fallen, comforting the broken hearted, calling men into companionship with the Father. His manner of life and his message were so unacceptable to the ecclesiastical authorities of his day that in the end he was hanged upon a cross. And yet, in the anguish of those last moments, he cried out, "Father, forgive them, they do not know what they are doing."

Is Jesus' way of life practicable for men in this generation? Are men so constituted that it is hopeless to expect them to be dominated by his motives?

(2) HUMAN INSTINCTS

There is general agreement among psychologists today that the actions of human beings are motivated primarily by instincts, innate tendencies or psychical dispositions. "The behavior of man in the family," says Professor Thorndike, "in business, in the state, in religion, and in every other affair of life, is rooted in his unlearned original equipment of instincts and capacities." Are

these instincts or tendencies of such a nature as to make the motives of Jesus impracticable for most men?

Among the strongest instincts of man are those of sex, acquisition, anger, pugnacity and mastery. These instincts are often expressed in a manner which is anti-social, but it by no means follows that they are inherently anti-social. They are frequently expressed in ways which are of great social value. Moreover, there are other human instincts which most readily express themselves through social channels. Psychologists are generally agreed that the following tendencies are innate in human nature:

(1) *The instinct of creation or workmanship.* It is natural for men to make things. This is as truly a part of the nature of man as the desire for possessions. William James has said: "Constructiveness is a genuine and irresistible instinct in man as in the bee or beaver." If this tendency is not manifest in men today it is because of the artificial and adverse conditions under which they live.

(2) *The gregarious instinct and sensitiveness to approval and disapproval.* It is natural for men to desire to be together. This is one of the reasons for the growth of cities and the decline of rural communities. Not only do men like to be together, they are very sensitive to the opinion of the rest of the group. Ostracism is one of the severest penalties which can come to any man. Man cannot be happy by himself. A prominent sociologist has expressed the opinion that the social motive is "the strongest that sways us, even stronger in normal life than hunger or sex."

(3) *The instinct of self-respect.* It is natural for men to evaluate their own conduct and to desire to reach a standard which they have erected. Men delight in their own skill, strength, or righteousness. The desire for self-approval operates powerfully in all normal persons.

(4) *The instinct of parental love and self-sacrifice.* The love of parents for their children and the willingness to sacrifice for them is universal. Closely related is the tendency to be kind and considerate of others. Mutual aid is natural to human beings, as it is to the higher

animals. The subordination of selfish desires to the higher good of the group is characteristic of individuals in ascending civilization. "The power of sacrifice and renunciation," says Benjamin Kidd, "is the first and last word in the kind of efficiency which is deepening in the social era of the race. The progress of humanity, has, therefore, over and above every other feature this meaning. It is the epic of the vast, tragic, ennobling, immortalizing, all-conquering ethic of Renunciation."

(3) JESUS' WAY OF LIFE AND HUMAN NATURE

The reason for examining human instincts at this point is that such a study shows that human nature is not inevitably antagonistic to Jesus' way of life. The motives which prompted him to action are deeply ingrained in human nature and are altogether natural to normal persons.

The best proof of this statement is found in the fact that throughout the centuries many persons have applied his motives in all relationships of life. This has been true not only of Christian missionaries and ministers, but also of persons in many other vocations. There have been conspicuous illustrations of men of science who were motivated by a passion for truth and the desire to be of service to mankind, even though this devotion cost them their lives. The glorious record of these men is a repudiation of the idea that the possessive instincts are always dominant.

It seems strange that there should be any lingering doubts as to the power of self-sacrifice latent in all normal human beings, after the world-wide demonstration during the Great War. One does not need to be a believer in the righteousness or efficacy of war as a method, to recognize the fact that during the war there was a vast sacrificial outpouring of treasure and blood. In all of the belligerent nations the instincts of possession were subordinated to the instincts of service and self-giving. A stupendous volume of self-sacrifice was released and millions of men—Americans, Germans, Englishmen, Frenchmen, Austrians and Italians—gladly laid down their lives in what they believed to be a holy cause.

The experiences of war-time should convince us beyond doubt that *self-sacrifice is just as natural as any other of man's instincts and under appropriate circumstances is absolutely supreme in the average person.* The desire for possessions, craving for mastery, love of family, are ultimately less powerful than sacrificial devotion to a great cause.

At bottom there is no essential difference in the make-up of missionaries, scientists, soldiers and the common people in all walks of life. All are members of one species, children of one Father. All have the same instincts and innate tendencies. Love is just as natural as hate, mutual aid as antagonism, self-sacrifice as self-assertion. None of the motives of Jesus are unnatural for the normal person.

In this connection, Professor John Dewey says: "If there are difficulties in the way of social alteration—as there certainly are—they do not lie in an original aversion of human nature to serviceable action," but rather in the conditions under which men live. Professor Irving Fisher names seven major instincts, as follows: self-preservation, self-expression, self-respect, loyalty, home-making, play, worship. He then says: "Of the seven mentioned, only the instinct of self-preservation is even fairly well satisfied by the majority of workers. We thrum too continuously on the one string. Human nature is a harp of many strings. We must use the rest of the octave."

The task before us, then, is not the changing of human nature, but the creation of situations in which new sets of human instincts may more easily find expression. To this end, public opinion needs to be changed with regard to several vital points. Since individual action is profoundly affected by social approval and disapproval, this is a natural place to begin. It would seem that the public attitude needs to be changed with regard to three fundamental points in modern industry.

(4) CHANGES IN THE PUBLIC ATTITUDE NEEDED

First, with regard to the relative merits of possession and creation. In the United States it seems unquestion-

able that possession or ownership has generally been regarded much more highly than the element of creation or construction. The man who *has* things is usually more highly honored than the man who *does* things. Of course, there are exceptions to the rule, but in the average community the man with the greatest possessions is usually regarded as "the biggest man in town." The millionaire is usually more admired and envied than the teacher or preacher, although the degree of his service for his fellows may be negligible as compared with that of many other citizens. Therefore, the ideal held most vividly before the average young person is the desire to become rich.

This is not a high ideal and its pursuit is responsible for much of the strife and misery in the world today. The ideal which should constantly be held before the youth of the land is that of service, creation, construction, for the common good. Chief honors should go to those who are most successful in this realm and only the lesser honors to those who succeed in accumulating goods for their own selfish enjoyment. Upon the relative merits of creating and owning, public opinion should speak in clarion tones.

Second, there is need for a change in public opinion with regard to the purpose of engaging in business or industry. It is now too often assumed that young people should enter business or industry primarily as a means of making money. This is a low conception of business and places it on a different level than the ministry or certain other professions. No one would suggest that a young man should enter the ministry or the teaching profession primarily because it offers an opportunity to make money.

We need a new attitude toward industry. The chief purpose of industry is not to help men get rich; its chief purpose is to produce goods and services which are needed by the community. The idea that men should engage in business or industry primarily to make money is responsible for much of the present disorder and inefficiency.

Third, we need a new attitude toward competition

and co-operation. Throughout American history, competition has been glorified and regarded as the basis of our national prosperity. There is much to be said for this point of view. Competition has tended to develop self-reliance and independence of spirit and has contributed to social progress. It is probable, however, that the extent of this contribution has been highly exaggerated in the popular mind.

It seems time to challenge the sanctity of competition and to point out its real nature. A distinction should be made between modern competition in business and rivalry in games or artistic pursuits. The value of such rivalry is generally recognized. Commercial competition as a rule is not friendly rivalry and good sportsmanship. The primary purpose of commercial competition is to gain personal power or a larger share of the common store of goods and services. Its result usually is strife and bitterness and it is the basis of the intense struggle now being waged in industry, where employer is arrayed against employer, workman against workman, employers against workmen, and consumers against both employers and workmen.

It should be recognized that conditions in the United States have changed during the past three decades and that competition is less and less efficient. So long as land was cheap and plentiful and so long as industry was conducted in small units, competition was more effective and less destructive of human relations. Now that our population has greatly increased and that immense tracts of land are being monopolized by a few holders, with the consequence that land is increasingly expensive and difficult to secure by the average man, and since industry is increasingly being concentrated in great units, with fewer men owning their own tools, the results of competition are more and more disastrous.

Harmony and efficiency in industry depend upon co-operation. The need of the hour is for public opinion which will strongly disapprove selfish competition and approve co-operation for the common good. The times demand a multitude of intensive experiments in co-operation in all phases of industry. Public opinion should

bestow its blessings upon all genuine efforts to substitute the principle of co-operation for that of competition. Experiments in co-operative distribution, co-operative marketing, co-operative production and co-operative banking should be encouraged.

(5) THE OUTCOME OF CONTINUED STRIFE

The people of this generation will do well to pause and consider the probable outcome of the present strife if unchecked. It should be remembered that the peoples of the earth are being drawn into closer and closer contacts. Trade knows no boundaries and international competition is growing keener. The points of friction are multiplying and the danger zones are widening.

Within the different nations the situation is critical. The lines between employers and workers are being drawn more sharply. Bitterness in industrial relations is increasing. The belligerent parties in the struggle are growing in power. There is an increasing concentration of wealth and control and employers' associations are growing in power. Organized labor is also gaining strength. Industrial struggles are more and more disastrous to public welfare. Continued emphasis upon self-interest and competition can have no other end than intensified warfare in industry. A recent writer has said: "We must discover new motives or life will become sordid and desolate, and society a trough, a sty, and a slaughter pen." Unless new motives are made dominant, it is altogether probable that the nations will be plunged into further wars. And further wars on a wide scale will undoubtedly threaten the very existence of modern civilization. We should not allow ourselves to forget that several civilizations have perished from the earth in the course of human history.

The churches should realize the extent of their stake in the industrial struggle. The more intense this struggle becomes, the less influence they will have in any sphere of life. The churches in the United States should take warning from what is happening in England and on the Continent. There seems to be no doubt that the breach between the churches and the great masses of working

people is widening. In many European countries the churches are held in contempt by most workers, and have little influence in the community. The industrial struggle is not solely responsible for this condition, but it is a major factor.

Strife and warfare in industry undermine the very foundations upon which the churches rest. It is mockery to speak of brotherhood being a reality when men in industry are tearing at each other's vitals. The sooner the churches realize that their future usefulness depends upon a lessening of the industrial conflict, and the sooner they throw the full weight of their influence against self-interest and selfish competition and in favor of friendly co-operation for the public welfare, the better it will be for the world.

(6) POWER OF PUBLIC OPINION

A society which awards its honors on a basis of service, rather than on grounds of ownership; in which industry is based on production for social use, rather than for individual profit; and in which the method is that of co-operation for the common good, rather than selfish competition for private gain; will be one in which the chief barriers to harmony and efficiency in industry have been removed. A strong public expression on these three points would make possible an immense stride forward.

The power of public approval or disapproval is very great. If selfish competition for the sake of accumulating goods for personal enjoyment should be placed under the ban of public disapproval, and unselfish co-operation for the common good should receive the unqualified endorsement of public opinion, an atmosphere would be created in which the anti-social instincts would be sub-ordinated and the more social tendencies released. It has been said by Professor E. C. Hayes that "society has incalculable power to suppress what it sufficiently condemns and to promote what it sufficiently appreciates. . . . Society can create a situation in which wickedness will in general be imbecility."

In this connection, Benjamin Kidd said: "Every

institution in civilization is in fore-grips with a new kind of knowledge, the control of which will become a matter of life and death to it. It is clearly in evidence that the science of creating and transmitting public opinion under the influence of collective emotion is about to become the principal science of civilization, to the mastery of which all governments and all powerful interests will in the future address themselves with every resource at their command."

Religious people have a duty and an opportunity at this point. In the light of the teaching and example of Jesus it would seem that the churches should have a clear message with regard to the three points under consideration. Jesus uttered a warning against the desire for great possessions in these words: "Take heed, and keep yourselves from all covetousness; for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth." He warned his hearers against fruitless worry over food and raiment. In a parable he pictured the doom of a rich man who was intent only upon his own comfort and pleasure. The verdict of Jesus is emphatic that the possession of goods is of no importance as compared with creation, construction or service for the common good.

As to the relative merits of selfish competition and co-operation for the common good, it would seem that the teaching of Jesus is clear. Is selfish competition in accord with his teaching concerning the supremacy of love, goodwill and brotherhood? Is not co-operation the channel through which these attitudes most easily find expression?

In the light of this clear teaching, it would seem that the churches should be proclaiming with vigor the message that the purpose of industry is to produce goods which are needed, rather than to make possible the accumulation of private wealth, and that the method should be that of friendly co-operation rather than selfish competition.

Is it not high time that the title "Christian" be withdrawn from those persons who are motivated primarily by the selfish desire for great possessions or personal

power and whose ruthless competition and disregard of the welfare of competitors and the public is an utter denial of brotherhood—no matter how large their benevolent gifts and public benefactions may be? Should not the approval of the churches be reserved for those persons who, in the spirit of Jesus, are unselfishly co-operating with their fellows in serving the common good? Is not this the least that should be expected of the churches? *Strife and warfare are inevitable in a world which enthrones selfish competition.* It is futile to expect peace and harmony in industry so long as selfish competition receives the blessing of public opinion.

(7) THE RESOURCES OF RELIGIOUS PEOPLE

Religious people in the United States have the power to change the public attitude toward the three fundamental points under consideration. They have enormous resources at their disposal. There are over forty million communicants of the various churches. These persons acknowledge the supremacy of Jesus' way of life and are at least nominally committed to his leadership. Many of them are troubled over the strife and misery of this day and are increasingly sensitive to the evils of modern industry. For the most part their intentions are good. They will to do the right thing. There are more than one hundred thousand ministers in charge of congregations. There are hundreds of thousands of teachers in Sunday Schools and millions of pupils. The weekly circulation of the religious press runs into the millions. The latent power of the religious forces in America to influence public opinion is incalculable.

Among the resources of Christian people is a strong belief in the presence and co-operation of the Holy Spirit. The Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is a living God, who has been seeking through the ages to win men to his way of life and to establish His Kingdom upon earth. The realization of His presence and help in the task of making modern life conform to His will is an enormous inspiration to Christians and greatly increases their enthusiasm, courage and faith. One of the tragedies of these days is the fact that so many Christians are

seemingly unaware of the presence of God and make so little effort to co-operate with Him in building a better world.

The historian Lecky, in speaking of the influence of John Wesley and his followers, said: "England escaped the horrors of the French Revolution largely through the vehement religious enthusiasm which was at that very time passing through the middle and lower classes of people." It is possible that history may repeat itself in America during the next few decades and that in this land an awakening in the churches may prevent the worst excesses of the class-war which is even now sweeping over parts of Europe.

(8) SUMMARY

Let us again raise the question: Are the motives of Jesus practicable in modern business and professional life? It has been pointed out that psychologists are agreed that the instincts of creation, sensitiveness to social approval and disapproval, self-respect, parental love and self-sacrifice, are active in all normal persons. The vast release of latent self-sacrifice during the war is sufficient proof of this fact. The self-denial and unselfish service of Jesus are not contrary to human nature. The task before us is not the changing of human nature but the creation of situations in which the more social tendencies may more easily be given expression.

To this end, changes are needed in public opinion with regard to the relative merits of ownership versus service, as to whether the basis of industry is production for personal profit or for social use, as to whether selfish competition is better than friendly co-operation.

If changes in the public attitude on these three points do not take place, it seems certain that we shall have continued strife in industry and warfare between nations and that civilization itself will be seriously menaced. The churches have a great stake in the industrial struggle. They also have enormous latent power to form public opinion and to create situations in which the more social instincts will find expression.

The task before us is not an impossible one. The motives of Jesus are natural to man at his best and can be applied in modern business and professional life. They must be applied if life is to be made tolerable for mankind. The difficulties in the way of their application are stupendous. Courage of a high order is demanded. And yet in other realms men are not dismayed by obstacles. Behind the desk of one of the great industrial leaders of the nation is a small electric sign which he illuminates at psychological moments. It reads: CAN'T MUST BE OVERCOME.

This is the attitude pre-eminent for the Christian with regard to the obstacles which block the way to the application of the motives of Jesus in modern business and professional life. Can't *must* be overcome.

APPENDIX

Brief Extracts from

THE ACQUISITIVE SOCIETY[1]

By R. H. Tawney
Fellow of Balliol College, Oxford

A society which aimed at making the acquisition of wealth contingent upon the discharge of social obligations, which sought to proportion remuneration to service and denied it to those by whom no service was performed, which inquired first not what men possess but what they can make or create or achieve, might be called a Functional Society, because in such a society the main subject of social emphasis would be the performance of functions. But such a society does not exist, even as a remote ideal, in the modern world, though something like it has hung, an unrealized theory, before men's minds in the past. Modern societies aim at protecting economic rights, while leaving economic functions, except in moments of abnormal emergency, to fulfill themselves. . . . [28] Such societies may be called Acquisitive Societies, because their whole tendency and interest and preoccupation is to promote the acquisition of wealth.[29]

If society is to be healthy, men must regard themselves not as the owners of rights, but as trustees for the discharge of functions and the instruments of a social purpose.[51]

The application to property and industry of the principle of function is compatible with several different types of social organization. . . . The essential

[1] Published by Harcourt, Brace & Co., New York, 188 pages, $1.50. This is one of the great books of recent years and should be in the library of every student of social problems.

thing is that men should fix their minds upon the idea of purpose, and give that idea pre-eminence over all subsidiary issues.[84]

The application to industry of the principle of purpose is simple, however difficult it may be to give effect to it. It is to turn it into a Profession. A Profession may be defined most simply as a trade which is organized, incompletely, no doubt, but genuinely, for the performance of function. It is not simply a collection of individuals who get a living for themselves by the same kind of work. Nor is it merely a group which is organized exclusively for the economic protection of its members, though that is normally among its purposes. It is a body of men who carry on their work in accordance with rules designed to enforce certain standards both for the better protection of its members and for the better service of the public. The standards which it maintains may be high or low: all professions have some rules which protect the interest of the community and others which are an imposition on it. Its essence is that it assumes certain responsibilities for the competence of its members or the quality of its wares, and that it deliberately prohibits certain kinds of conduct on the ground that, though they may be profitable to the individual, they are calculated to bring into disrepute the organization to which he belongs.[92]

The difference between industry as it exists today and a profession is, then, simple and unmistakable. The essence of the former is that its only criterion is the financial return which it offers to its shareholders. The essence of the latter, is that, though men enter it for the sake of livelihood, the measure of their success is the service which they perform, not the gains which they amass. They may, as in the case of a successful doctor, grow rich; but the meaning of their profession, both for themselves and for the public, is not that they make money but that they make health, or safety, or knowledge, or good government or good law. They depend on it for their income, but they do not consider that any conduct which increases their income is on that account good. And while a boot-manufacturer who retires with

half a million is counted to have achieved success, whether the boots which he made were of leather or brown paper, a civil servant who did the same would be impeached. So, if they are doctors, they recognize that there are certain kinds of conduct which cannot be practised, however large the fee offered for them, because they are unprofessional; if scholars and teachers, that it is wrong to make money by deliberately deceiving the public, as is done by makers of patent medicines, however much the public may clamor to be deceived; if judges or public servants, that they must not increase their incomes by selling justice for money; if soldiers, that the service comes first, and their private inclinations, even the reasonable preference of life to death, second. Every country has its traitors, every army its deserters, and every profession its blacklegs. To idealize the professional spirit would be very absurb; it has its sordid side, and, if it is to be fostered in industry, safeguards will be needed to check its excesses. But there is all the difference between maintaining a standard which is occasionally abandoned, and affirming as the central truth of existence that there is no standard to maintain. The meaning of a profession is that it makes the traitors the exception, not as they are in industry, the rule.[94]

If industry is to be organized as a profession, two changes are requisite, one negative and one positive. The first, is that it should cease to be conducted by the agents of property-owners for the advantage of property-owners, and should be carried on, instead, for the service of the public. The second, is that, subject to rigorous public supervision, the responsibility for the maintenance of the service should rest upon the shoulders of those, from organizer and scientist to laborer, by whom, in effect, the work is conducted.[96]

Such a change in the character of ownership would have three advantages. It would abolish the government of industry by property. It would end the payment of profits to functionless shareholders by turning them into creditors paid a fixed rate of interest. It would lay the only possible foundations for industrial peace by making it possible to convert industry into a profession

carried on by all grades of workers for the service of the public, not for the gain of those who own capital.[106]

Either the principle of industry is that of function, in which case slack work is only less immoral than no work at all; or it is that of grab, in which case there is no morality in the matter. But it cannot be both. And it is useless either for property-owners or for Governments to lament the mote in the eye of the trade unions as long as, by insisting on the maintenance of functionless property, they decline to remove the beam in their own.[133]

During the greater part of the nineteenth century industry was driven by two forces, hunger and fear, and the employer commanded them both. He could grant or withhold employment as he pleased. If men revolted against his terms he could dismiss them, and if they were dismissed what confronted them was starvation or the workhouse. Authority was centralized; its instruments were passive; the one thing which they dreaded was unemployment. . . . That system might be lauded as efficient or denounced as inhuman. But, at least, as its admirers were never tired of pointing out, it worked. And, like the Prussian State, which alike in its virtues and deficiencies it not a little resembled, as long as it worked it survived denunciations of its methods, as a strong man will throw off a disease. But today it is ceasing to have even the qualities of its defects. It is ceasing to be efficient. It no longer secures the ever-increasing output of wealth which it offered in its golden prime, and which enabled it to silence criticism by an imposing spectacle of material success. Though it still works, it works unevenly, amid constant friction and jolts and stoppages, without the confidence of the public and without full confidence even in itself, a tyrant who must intrigue and cajole where formerly he commanded, a goaler who, if not yet deprived of whip, dare only administer moderate chastisement, and who, though he still protests that he alone can keep the treadmill moving and get the corn ground, is compelled to surrender so much of his authority as to make it questionable whether he is worth his keep.[140]

The burden of our civilization is not merely, as many suppose, that the product of industry is ill-distributed, or its conduct tyrannical, or its operation interrupted by embittered disagreements. It is that industry itself has come to hold a position of exclusive predominance among human interests, which no single interest, and least of all the provision of the material means of existence, is fit to occupy. Like a hypochondriac who is so absorbed in the processes of his own digestion that he goes to his grave before he has begun to live, industrialized communities neglect the very objects for which it is worth while to acquire riches in their feverish preoccupation with the means by which riches can be acquired.[183]

That obsession by economic issues is as local and transitory as it is repulsive and disturbing. To future generations it will appear as pitiable as the obsession of the seventeenth century by religious quarrels appears today; indeed, it is less rational, since the object with which it is concerned is less important. And it is a poison which inflames every wound and turns each trivial scratch into a malignant ulcer. Society will not solve the particular problems of industry which afflict it, until that poison is expelled, and it has learned to see industry itself in the right perspective. If it is to do that, it must rearrange its scale of values. It must regard economic interests as one element in life, not as the whole of life. It must persuade its members to renounce the opportunity of gains which accrue without any corresponding service, because the struggle for them keeps the whole community in a fever. It must so organize industry that the instrumental character of economic activity is emphasized by its subordination to the social purposes for which it is carried on.[184]

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